



# NEWARK TOWN COUNCIL

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## FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

<b>Membership Present:</b>	<b>Councillor</b>	<b>D Lloyd (in the Chair)</b>
	Councillors	M G Cope (Vice-Chairman) Mrs C Barker-Powell (Ap) Mrs I Brown (Ap) M Cleasby Mrs R Crowe R A Crowe Mrs G Dawn (A) P Duncan (A) Ms H Gent K Girling L Goff S Haynes D Hyde (Ap) D Jones T Roberts MBE (Ap) M Skinner R Williams
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	Mrs C Barker-Powell, Mrs I Brown, D Hyde, T Roberts MBE
<b>Officers Present:</b>	<b>Town Clerk</b>	Alan Mellor
<b>Taking Notes:</b>	<b>PA to the Town Clerk</b>	Helen Crossland
	There were no members of the public present.	
<b>Venue:</b>	Council Chamber, Town Hall	

**FGP30/18/19 Minutes of the last meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**FGP31/18/19 Matters Arising**

**FGP27/18/19 – Cemetery Update**

Cllr R A Crowe reminded the Town Clerk that it had been requested that a new flag pole for the Green Flag be expedited; the Town Clerk reported that the target date for planning permission for the pole was 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

Cllr Mrs R Crowe then asked when the visit to Bramcote was going to be, as agreed at the last meeting. The Town Clerk agreed to speed this up and let Members know.

**FGP32/18/19 Declarations of Interest**

It was **AGREED** to accept any Declarations of Interest as and when they arose during the meeting.

**FGP33/18/19 Payment Schedule 5/19**

Cllr L Goff queried Voucher No 581, Liz Hobbs Group, Brass Explosion £1,860.00. As the event had not taken place, he asked if the Town Council had any insurance cover for such an occurrence.

The Town Clerk responded that insurance would cover loss of income, not expenditure. The expenditure incurred was for the entertainment.

Cllr M Skinner queried Voucher No 598, Newark Town Bowls Club, Bowls Maintenance £3,500.00. He felt that this should be shown as a 'grant' not maintenance. The Town Clerk agreed, and said he would change it accordingly.

Members then **AGREED** that payment in accordance with Payment Schedule 5/19 in the sum of £159,824.54 (one hundred and fifty nine thousand, eight hundred and twenty four pounds and 54p) be **APPROVED**.

**FGP34/18/19 Street Collection Licences**

There were no Street Collection Licenses to consider.

**FGP35/18/19 Voluntary Body Grant Applications**

There were no Voluntary Body Grant Applications to consider.

**FGP36/18/19 Financial Out Turn**

The Town Clerk went through the Agenda Report.

Members then **RECEIVED** and **APPROVED** the financial out-turn report as at 31 August 2018.

**FGP37/18/19 Final Accounts 2017/18 – External Audit**

The Town Clerk explained to Members what had happened with regard to the external audit of the Town Council's financial accounts for 2017/18; despite the accounts being sent before the due date in June the external auditor has not completed his work and has therefore issued an interim certificate.

This means that the Town Council has not been able to publicise the completion of the audit by the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> September.

The external auditor has requested further information on the Town Council's external investments, this has now been supplied but no further response has been received.

It was **AGREED** to **NOTE** the Auditors Interim Certificate and request that a report be brought back to this Committee as soon as possible.

It was also **NOTED** that Newark Town Council had fulfilled its responsibilities in all regards.

Cllr D Jones said that this was a very disappointing position; particularly when the Town Council had complied with everything that had been asked of it; Cllr M Cope agreed and said that this should be fully documented in the minutes for historical purposes.

<b>Meeting Closed:</b>	<b>7.45pm</b>	<b>Next Meeting:</b>	<b>Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018</b>
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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION – PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT EVENT**

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018, 18:00 hrs**

Following the formal conclusion of the meeting, the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee informed all Members present that the Town Clerk had received an invitation from Nottinghamshire County Council to attend a briefing event on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October at County Hall. This was being held following the publication of a paper proposing options to introduce a system of Unitary Local Government across the County to replace the current 'two tier' structure.

This proposal had been received too late for the matter to be included in this Agenda, and as there was not another meeting of this Committee before the event he sought Members approval to consider the

proposals on an informal basis in order that the Town Clerk has an understanding of the Town Council's views when he attends the event.

The Chairman put forward the following points which, if Members agree, could form the basis of the Town Council's response at this point in time:

- (i) Any pre-existing devolution agreements and operations must be honoured in any future Unitary structure,
- (ii) Acknowledge that such a change might lead to the introduction of a cap on the Town Council's precept,
- (iii) These proposals could lead to a reduction in community engagement and local representation as local services are provided at a higher level than currently exists with the District Council. The paper contains no proposals to localise services and budgets to be closer to the communities that receive those services,
- (iv) There is no clear business case to support the proposals,
- (v) The process appears to be far too hurried for everyone to comprehend its implications and appears to be based purely on a Nottinghamshire County Council perspective,
- (vi) There is no clear logic as to why the City boundaries have been excluded from any of the options tabled within this review. Given the City Council's importance at a national level as a 'Core City', any review such as this must include an analysis of options that increase the size of the City Council,
- (vii) The introduction of larger Unitary Councils could lead to the position where more services and functions are devolved down to Town/Parish Councils. This in turn will lead to an increase in the scope of Parish Councillors' responsibilities and the time commitment to undertake the role.

It was agreed that at present, Newark Town Council could not support the proposals; as they stand they are not logical and are deficient in not addressing the whole of Local Government in the County including the City Council.